

REMARKS

Claims 7-10 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, claim 7 has been amended to recite that the holes referred to in claim 7 are provided in the edge zones of the carrier plate. In this connection, reference can be made to page 8, line 13 to page 9, line 12 of the present application. Accordingly, it is believed that the Examiner's rejection has been eliminated.

Claims 1, 4, 5 and 7 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Miyasaka et al. (U.S. Patent 6,270,215). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In rejecting the claims of the present application, the Examiner argues that the Miyasaka et al. reference discloses a carrier plate provided with holes and an air displacement means operatively associated with these holes for drawing air via the holes from the space between the plate and the receiving material aligned on the plate. However, the Miyasaka et al. patent clearly teaches that these holes should be provided in the front of and in the rear of the actual print range. Please see in this connection Figure 2 and column 3, lines 60-62 of the reference patent. The Miyasaka et al. patent also explains why it would be

advantageous to choose such an arrangement, that is, in order to avoid the absorption of ink droplets into the suction holes (please see column 4, lines 61-64).

In contradistinction thereto, the Applicants have developed an apparatus wherein the suction holes are provided in a portion of the carrier plate that corresponds to the print range. By so doing, it can be insured with a great degree of certainty that the parts of the receiving material, even those parts which are being printed, remain out of contact with the ink application mechanism (see page 2, lines 10-14). As the Examiner will note, claim 1 has been amended to specifically recite this advantageous feature of the present invention. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 1, as amended, and all of the claims dependent thereon are clearly patentable over the reference relied upon by the Examiner.

Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyasaka et al. as applied to claim 1 above. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Since claim 2 is dependent from claim 1, which is considered allowable over the prior art, claim 2 is also considered to be allowable for the same reason.

It is noted, with appreciation, that the Examiner has indicated that claims 3, 6 and 8-10, although objected to as being dependent upon a rejected

claim, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims of the present application are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Mr. Joseph A. Kolasch (Reg. No. 22,463) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

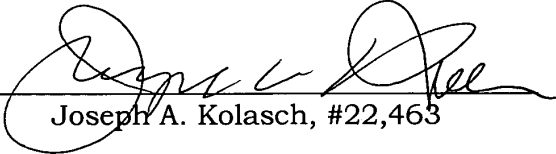
Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicant respectfully petitions for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of \$930.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit

Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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